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FARM EMPLOYMENT

IN VIRGINIA

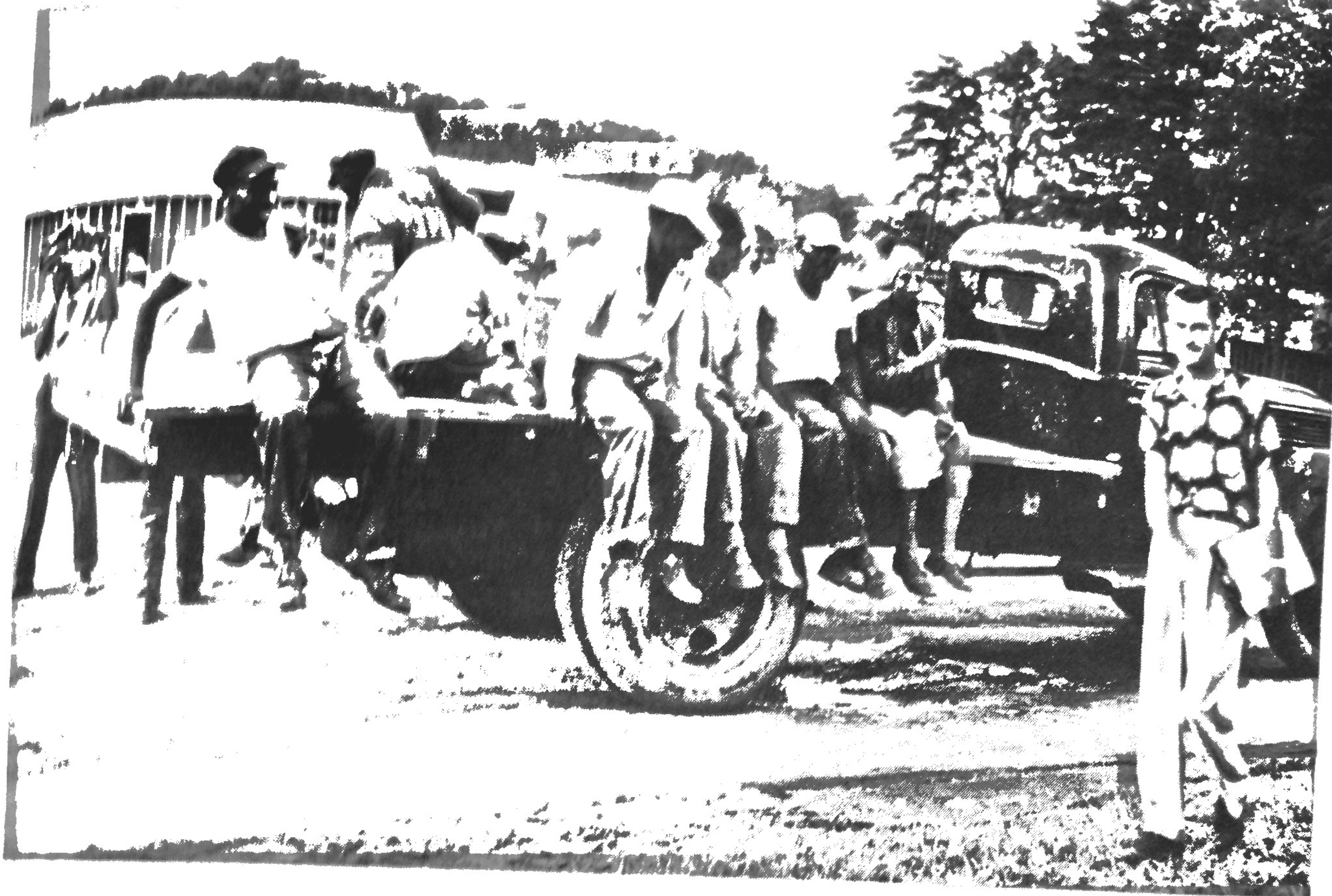
1953

Unemployment Compensation Commission
VIRGINIA STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

PART II - Statistical Supplement

EMPLOYMENT OF SEASONAL HIRED WORKERS IN AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROCESSING WITH AGRICULTURAL PLACEMENTS, BY MONTH, 1953

Period	Agricultural Employment				Agricul- tural place- ments	Food Processing Employment		
	Total	Domestic		Foreign		Total	Local	Non- local
		Local	Non- local					
I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
January	0	0	0	0	59	100	100	0
February	0	0	0	0	87	100	100	0
March	0	0	0	0	79	0	0	0
April	0	0	0	0	1,012	0	0	0
May	7,580	2,420	5,160	0	6,655	1,500	1,500	0
June	14,730	6,140	8,590	0	19,918	1,990	1,990	0
July	18,940	7,820	11,120	0	11,569	3,900	3,900	0
August	7,800	5,870	1,930	0	4,750	2,960	2,960	0
September	10,670	8,030	2,270	370	12,381	5,450	5,450	0
October	13,820	8,600	4,744	476	29,699	5,690	5,690	0
November	800	800	0	0	1,385	2,000	2,000	0
December	0	0	0	0	76	150	150	0



OFFSHORE WORKERS

Several hundred others crossed to the Eastern Shore without stopping at the Little Creek office. Those using other highways mentioned were first employed either in Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey or New York. A sizeable number went directly from Florida to New York without stopping in states along the itinerary route.

Through the special arrangements made by the Virginia agency, a sufficient number of migrants stopped again in Virginia in the fall on their way south from fulfilling their northern commitments. They assisted in the harvesting of apples, fall beans, sweet potatoes, peanuts and field corn.

About 700 copies of the National Work Guide were distributed to crew leaders at the Information Station. Some 3,000 FLI emblem windshield stickers also were distributed at this point, and proved a popular item. These stickers identified the car or truck on which they were placed as part of the farm labor movement, and were recognized by law-enforcement officers as a proper means of identifying migrant farm workers.

No Puerto Ricans were brought into the state under contract, but during the visit of the Virginia representative to Florida, it was discovered that approximately 5,000 natives of the island were present as "free wheelers." Virginia representatives were able to bring Virginia

growers into contact with the users of these workers in Florida. Arrangements were made by them for an interchange of this labor, and approximately 300 Puerto Ricans came to Virginia under this arrangement.

When it became apparent that there would be insufficient domestic labor to harvest the apple crop in the Winchester area, steps were taken to secure the services of workers from the British West Indies. As an initial move, a meeting of Employment Service personnel was held in Richmond on July 27, with local office and field supervisory personnel present. Available information was analyzed, and a justification presented to Bureau of Employment Security in required form. As a result, the Bureau approved the use of 540 foreign workers from September 16 through November 11.

The pre-season screening process by which approximately 500 Bahamian workers were selected while in the states of Minnesota and New York, already has been described in the section on "Planning." In this regard, however, it should be noted that due to the extremely hot weather experienced in the north during the harvesting of sweet corn, it became necessary to transfer Bahamian workers to Virginia at an earlier date than anticipated. This change did not inconvenience Virginia growers in the least, since the apple crop had matured approximately one week earlier than usual. The first group of 36 Bahamians arrived in Winchester September 6. Other group arrivals were as follows: September 10 - 74; September 11 - 74; September 13 - 177; September 21 - 35; September 24 - 99, making a total of 503.

At the close of the contract period at Winchester, 76 of these Bahamians were returned to their homeland in Nassau. The remaining hands were sent under contract to the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association, Orlando, Florida. The first contingent consisting of 27 men, was sent to Florida on October 12, and the remainder were all shipped out to Florida by November 12. This early departure was made possible by excellent harvesting weather and fast maturing of fruit.

The average number of bushels picked by the Bahamians was much greater than the average accomplishment of other apple pickers engaged in the harvest at Winchester. This no doubt is due to the fact that all were grown men in their prime, with previous experience in picking fruit. It should be pointed out, however, that they had some advantage over other pickers, in that spot-picking had been finished and scattered fruit harvested prior to their arrival. The chief difficulty encountered in bringing so many Bahamians to Winchester was that of housing. It became necessary to build an additional barracks-type building, which was 96 by 32 feet in dimension. Also, it was necessary to double the dining space, and camp equipment had to be purchased for the new addition.

As mentioned in previous reports, the Bahamians appeared to be subject to a series of minor illnesses -- inconvenient rather than serious. To meet the problem of lost man-hours, which had been rising, the Frederick County Fruit Growers Association arranged for a daily clinic, with a Winchester physician in charge. Workers who reported sick were referred without delay to this clinic, and the physician determined